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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development of an undergraduate certificate program for direct service workers employed in the field of aging. Currently there is a lack of such training programs because the field of educational gerontology is fairly new, most programs focus on graduate degrees, and there is a widespread misconception that employees receive indepth inservice training on the job. As the number of older adults increases and funds for traditional higher education decrease, there will be increasing need to train direct service workers to apply research and theory to the practical needs of older adults. The program was developed at the University of Minnesota in response to positive feedback from a faculty survey, review of aging training literature, and study of gerontology programs in other colleges. A community advisory committee helped develop the core curriculum, which includes courses in sociology, psychology, biology, interpersonal communication, and existing public health and service programs; a choice of electives; and internship experience. Funds were obtained through the university's Center for Educational Development, continuing education and extension division, all-university council on aging, and the general college. In the program's first year, 1978-79 the backgrounds of the 30 students enrolled in the program were diverse. Students were predominantly women in their 30s and 40s. (AV)

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THE CERTIFICATE in AGING STUDIES:

A DEVELOPMENT MODEL for the 1980's

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A PAPER PRESENTED TO

THE FIFTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

THE ASSOCIATION FOR GERONTOLOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MARCH, 1979

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In the 1980's two major issues will dominate the work of educational gerontologists. The issues may be seen as major obstacles or unique opportunities depending on the perspective from which they are viewed. The need for widely shared development models will become even more acute as these issues are addressed by new program developers in the next decade.

The most important of these issues is actually an opportunity which has been largely overlooked in the early years of gerontology programming. The need for coherent programs of study for direct service workers who are already employed in the field of aging is critical. This neglected opportunity is most evident in the statistics on the training levels of persons who currently work with the elderly. Robert Butler points out that more than eighty percent of the one million persons directly working in the field by 1980 will have no training in gerontology. This glaring issue must be addressed if we hope to translate the latest research, methods, and program ideas into an improved quality of life for the nation's elderly.

A second major issue in the next decade may prove to be an obstacle which inhibits new program initiatives at any level. Educational gerontologists will almost certainly face an increasingly austere financial squeeze as national and state governments dismantle educational budgets. Federal and state legislators have already given us a glimpse of the future as budgetary restraint became the popular issue in the 1978 elections. Higher education budgets will become easy targets for future cuts as the enrollment decline becomes a reality. We can certainly expect that this climate of opinion will have severe limiting effects on new program initiatives in the 1980's. The financial restraints of the 1980's may impede efforts to create solid educational programs for direct service workers unless educational gerontologists develop new strategies and models.

Direct Service Training

Direct service workers currently employed in the field of aging have been largely overlooked by new program developers for several reasons. During the 1960's and 1970's the Administration on Aging sponsored the development of graduate level training programs in order to meet the pressing need for administrators, researchers, and teachers. Because the field of gerontology was new, it was a practical necessity to begin development at the masters and doctoral levels first. At the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, delegates recognized the growing need for undergraduate level training for the several hundred thousand persons who were employed in the field and for the thousands of new persons entering the field during the 1970's.

A national survey of gerontology programs sponsored by the Association for Gerongology in Higher Education revealed that by 1976 more than 1200 colleges offered at least one course on aging, and several dozen had created coherent programs of study leading to the PhD, MA or graduate certification. A few colleges had developed undergraduate major, minors, and certificates, but they were primarily designed to prepare traditional students to enter the field or continue training at the graduate level. A preliminary overview of more recently developed graduate and undergraduate programs indicates that the early tendency to emphasize research, planning, and administration for students seeking entry to the field has continued.

Several untested assumptions about employed direct service workers also explains the general absence of training programs directed toward their educational needs. We assume they have already received training through traditional programs offered by departments of social work, public health, nursing, and others. Many direct service workers, however, have never received any formal higher education and even when they have, it seldom included training in the

multi-disciplinary field of gerontology. Until the last few years, established departments did not have the faculty resources needed to offer aging courses and even today many offer only a single course or field experience to students who plan to devote their careers to working with the elderly.

A second assumption often made about direct service workers is that the nursing home, senior center, or multi-service agencies which employ them provide the necessary pre-service training followed up by well-rounded in-service programs. The quality and quantity of pre-service and in-service training varies widely across the country. Pre-service training for nurses aides, for example, often consists of a one or two day on-the-job observation where an experienced aide demonstrates the techniques needed for bed and body work. In-home service providers may learn how to clean, prepare meals, and balance checkbooks, but they usually do not learn observation techniques, information and referral techniques, or helping skills. Some agencies do better than others in pre-service training if time and budget pressures permit. In-service training also varies widely. Some agencies spend a small percentage of their budget for employees to attend conferences, workshops, and seminars or for regularly scheduled training sessions conducted by an in-service educator. Others that may not have the financial or training resources at hand seldom offer staff an opportunity to learn new care-giving skills or ways to understand the older adult. Few agencies have well-conceived, thoroughly planned, or adequately funded in-service programs that regularly expose staff to the latest research, skills, and program ideas developed by gerontologists. When agency budget constraints become more severe, as we expect in the next decade, it will frequently be in-service funds that are eliminated first.

A final assumption which inhibits new program development for direct service workers is the commonly held belief that the knowledge and skills

needed to work with the elderly can be learned on the job. It is certainly true that direct daily contact with and observation of the aged can be a continuing learning experience. Most gerontology programs recognize this fact by requiring that students take a supervised field placement. The difficulty with most on-the-job learning experiences is that they are not supervised by a trained educator who carefully nurtures the employees growth. Working with the elderly can be a baffling, confusing, and ultimately depressing experience to the untrained staff person who does not understand the physical, psychological, and social limitations of old age. Without the necessary communication skills and broad knowledge of the aging process, on-the-job experience with the elderly, especially the frail elderly, can become a burdensome chore instead of a rewarding career choice. The disturbingly high rate of turnover amongst nursing home staff, particularly nurses aides, is partially the result of the inadequate or non-existent training they receive.

These assumptions, as well as the early emphasis on graduate programs, have limited the development of training models for the nearly one million persons who work with the elderly. The time has come for educational gerontologists to turn their attention to this large group of untrained or undertrained service-providers and care-givers. It is time that we begin to communicate the latest gerontological research and methods into practical knowledge and skills that can be used by direct service workers. If we continue to neglect in the 1980's the broad training needs of this diverse group, we will have failed in one of our most important educational functions.

Financial Limits of the 1980's

Developing new training programs for direct service workers will not be an easy task when you consider the multiple limits which can be expected in the

next decade. Interdisciplinary program development is always a complex and difficult undertaking where the boundary lines between traditional disciplines are firm. In large institutions it may take several years to gain support for new courses, development of a multi-disciplinary faculty, and final approval of a program initiative. The political complexities of securing approval from autonomous academic departments, colleges, and other related units can sometimes be discouraging. There is still a shortage of trained gerontologists, few curricular models below the graduate level, and no established career ladder in the field of aging. Most colleges will have little new money available for program development or additional faculty positions as enrollments steadily decline in the future.

The financial contraints of the 1980's may be the most severe problem confronting educational gerontologists. Public opinion polls and government activity at all levels clearly indicate the popularity of the "proposition 13" idea. Since most public college budgets are usually linked to student enrollments, we can anticipate that declining educational budgets will closely follow the decline of traditional students. Even if our most optimistic goals for adult education and lifelong learning are realized in the next ten years, we can still expect financial austerity. In this context, new program initiatives, however far-sighted or innovative, will frequently be overlooked as educational administrators and legislators protect resources which are already established. During periods of retrenchment our colleagues are not as likely to favor programs which require new faculty and departmental resources.

Despite optimistic predictions for continuing growth in the field of gerontology and direct service to an expanding older population, we must begin to face the real possibility that new or expanded government sponsored programs may also become victims of fiscal restraint. We can no longer assume that

federal and state budgets will continue to expand to meet the needs of the nation's older people. The nationwide debate over the "graying of the federal budget" is an early warning that monies for aging programs may be among the first to be restricted. Funds for training of existing staff, already a rather low priority, are not likely to meet the growing needs of the future. Clearly, educational gerontologists must face some unpleasant facts of life in the next decade as the academy and the government grope toward a steady state.

Although the picture painted here is rather grim at first glance, it is not meant to be seen with sad resignation but rather as a challenge to our creativity and dedication. Formidable obstacles have faced educational gerontologists in the past and many have been overcome. We must cope with the major issues of our time within the boundaries imposed by external sources. To do so, we need models of development that clarify the issues and point out directions for the future. The balance of this paper explains the development process of a new undergraduate certificate program for direct service workers who are already employed in the field. This program was created under the constraints of severe budget and staff limitations at the University of Minnesota. The experience gained from more than two years of development work may be helpful to others who face similar issues and constraints in the future.

Since late 1975, faculty in the University of Minnesota's General College have been working on an undergraduate Certificate in Aging Studies primarily for employed direct service workers. By the beginning of the 1978-79 academic year, the program was ready for an experimental offering through the Extension division's night school. Thirty students have been accepted into a program which consists of five newly developed core courses, an elective, and one of three internship options. This thirty to thirty-six credit program is intended

to provide basic knowledge and skills in the biology, psychology, sociology of aging, communication techniques with older adults, and an overview of public programs. The program can be completed in one year.

The General College is a small undergraduate college within the large University of Minnesota. It has achieved a national reputation as the first open-door college in the United States (1932) and for its innovative programs which respond to the needs of the urban community in which it is located. There are approximately 2700 full-time students enrolled in the College, more than one-hundred faculty members representing the major disciplines, and unique counseling and helping services. The faculty pride themselves on teaching, interdisciplinary course development, and service to by-passed student populations. Interest in program development in gerontology is a natural outgrowth of the College's long-term commitment to meet the changing educational needs of the community. During the last few years the College's ability to respond to new program requests has been hampered by University-wide retrenchments resulting from budget tightening by the state legislature. The development of the Certificate in Aging Studies must be understood within the context of this fiscally austere environment.

Assessment of Need

The College's Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences ranked new program development in aging studies as one of its top curriculum priorities in 1975. The Division granted a two-quarter, fifty percent released time request for one faculty member to study the prospects for development. The assessment of need included a faculty survey, a review of aging training literature, and a curriculum study of gerontology programs in other colleges.

Faculty Survey. The survey was designed to find out which faculty members

were already teaching aging related materials and who had interest in future curriculum developments in gerontology. Although there was only one aging course in the College at the time of the survey, there were ten others which included units or materials about aging. Furthermore, a wide variety of basic knowledge and skills courses in the human service field were already an important part of the College curriculum. The survey revealed a surprisingly high level of faculty interest in gerontology and a willingness amongst many to participate in development work. From the faculty survey we concluded that the College was receptive to a new program initiative in aging studies, faculty were interested in working on the initiative, and some expertise in aging was present.

Review of the Literature. A review of the training literature was not as encouraging. There were few, if any, affordable models for undergraduate curriculum development. The job market for undergraduate majors, minors, or certificates was uncertain at best since there was little data available and no real structure or career ladder in the field of gerontology. In fact, "aging" and "gerontology" were not even listed in the Occupational Outlook Handbook because the field was not considered distinct from more traditional occupations such as nurse, social worker, recreational specialist, etc. The literature was unclear about the direction aging training was headed as the population of aged persons multiplied. Clearly, there was a need for more precise data, models, and direction if the need for well-trained direct service workers was to be met in the future.

Curriculum Study. The structure, method of delivery, and course content of several graduate and undergraduate gerontology programs was studied. As expected, most courses of study were offered at the graduate level with an emphasis on planning, administration, and research. In 1975-76 there were few undergraduate programs in gerontology and even fewer with a direct service

orientation. The only consistent pattern that was notable was the propensity to include coursework from the three core disciplines of gerontology: sociology, psychology, and biology.

Because the literature was not very helpful and there did not seem to be any curricular models for the proposed program of studies, interviews were conducted with a wide variety of persons from the local aging network, including direct service workers and knowledgeable faculty colleagues. We were seeking advice on basic or core knowledge and skills which direct service workers might need in the course of their work. Another question we faced was how to package and deliver the proposed program to best serve the students we sought. All our questions were not fully answered but the course content became more defined and the program structure more clear as a result of these countless discussions.

The results of the needs assessment were analyzed and presented to the faculty of the Social and Behavioral Sciences division in a written report. It recommended that the General College develop a new undergraduate program for direct service workers. The report went on to suggest a core of knowledge and skills needed for direct service workers and recommended several new courses which might be developed.

For a small investment of released faculty time the College learned a great deal about the potential need and support for a new program initiative. Interviews with faculty colleagues from the All-University Council on Aging revealed that other units and individuals had previously attempted to create a similar program but had met with little success or cooperation. However, most of the information gathered in the initial study was encouraging. Faculty in the General College were genuinely supportive of the concept; staff from the Extension division's Older Adult Program wanted to work with faculty to

deliver the courses through night school; members of the All-University Council on Aging encouraged development and eventually supported it with funds; faculty from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs masters program on aging expressed interest in developing a core course; and finally, the University's Center for Educational Development encouraged application for development funds. With such widespread support the development effort was off to a good beginning.

Establishing a Community Advisory Committee

An important early task was establishment of a community advisory committee to assist in the continuing definition of a core curriculum and to advise on the countless questions we faced. The advisory committee was composed of two older persons, representatives from the Minnesota Board on Aging, the local Area Agency on Aging, in-service educators and nursing home staff, the Senior Workers Association, United Way, and members of the All-University Council on Aging. The committee met once a quarter over lunch to discuss a prepared agenda of issues, questions, and problems. Among the topics considered were the proper mixture of basic knowledge and skills for the intended audience, standards and criteria for acceptance into the program, options for student internship experiences. A recurring question was the definition of core materials which would be broad enough to adequately introduce students to a multi-disciplinary field like gerontology and yet not so lengthy that it would take years of study to complete. A complicating factor was the wide range of previous education, work experiences, and career interests of the students we expected to apply. The ideas, questions, and suggestions of the advisory committee were an invaluable source of assistance and stimulation. They helped to keep the program rooted in the practical day-to-day world of the direct

service worker and gave us credibility in the local aging network.

Finding Funds

At the time these early development efforts were taking place, there were virtually no development monies available in the College budget. Retrenchment forced us to seek funding from outside resources. Federal and State sources did not appear very promising. It was decided that the time and energy required to seek government sponsored funds might be better spent seeking assistance within the University. Considering the financial restraints of the time, it became clear that the program would have to be created on a very small budget. Small parts of the necessary funds were received from four different University sources. The Center for Educational Development became the most important recurring source of development funds. A grant application for $11,000 was recommended by the Center's review committee; however, the state legislature slashed the Center's budget and they were unable to fund the proposal. In subsequent months, we reapplied to the Center for two "small grants" totaling $3600 and an "educational development grant" of $4000. This seed money gave us the necessary base to operate from, and it helped to stimulate additional funding from other sources. Funds were also received from Continuing Education and Extension ($4000), the All-University Council on Aging ($800), and additional release time from General College ($2200). Without counting the secretarial services and supplies donated by General College and Extension, the total development budget was close to $15,000. In today's inflated economy, this must certainly be considered a "shoestring budget." In tomorrow's austere economic environment, development budgets such as this may become a necessity.

Recruiting Core Faculty

A program such as this cannot be developed with such severe financial limitations without a committeed core faculty. Since there was only one College faculty member who had engaged in extensive teaching and research in gerontology and there was no possibility of hiring new faculty, it was necessary to recruit additional members from College faculty. The faculty survey identified ten persons who were currently engaged in limited teaching and/or research in aging-related topics. Further discussion revealed that many were willing to do the reading, research, and re-direction which would be necessary to develop a core course. After a careful sleection process in which the faculty members' interest, areas of expertise, and teaching excellence were weighed three faculty agreed to develop courses and participate in the program's continuing growth. A flat sum of $2000 supported each faculty members' efforts during the summer. Although these funds did not adequately remunerate faculty for the time and energy they devoted to the task, it was offered as a kind of honorarium.

Further elaboration of the criteria used to select core faculty may be helpful to future program developers. A strong interest in aging and a willingness to pursue that interest farther were the first important criteria. Interest had to be strong since funds were limited.

A second set of factors were the disciplined areas of expertise and related teaching experiences of interested faculty. For example, the person who developed the "Biology of Aging" course had worked extensively with nurses and other medical personnel. His innovative courses on "The Human Body" and "The Human Heart" were well received in several locations across the state, including the Mayo Clinic. For him to broaden his reading and research for an introductory level, "Biology of Aging" course would not be a significant leap or change in

direction. The faculty member who agreed to develop the "Communicating With the Older Adult" course also fit naturally into the program because of her expertise in organization, group, and interpersonal communication skills and her innovative course on "Communication for Health Workers," which included a major unit on death and dying. The person who developed the "Psychology Applied to Aging" course had demonstrated his growing interest and expertise in gerontology in a major unit on aging in a social psychology course and by an interesting research project on retention of nurses aides in nursing homes. A fourth core faculty member was recruited from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute masters program on aging since General College had no faculty with a strong interest or expertise in public programs on aging. Furthermore, the Institute had several faculty with extensive teaching, research, and direct service experience in the field of gerontology who were interested in the program. The person who ultimately agreed to develop and teach the "Public Programs in Aging: National, State, Local" course had several years experience as a social worker with the aged, planner for the Minnesota Board on Aging, and researcher and teacher of public policy in aging at the Institute.

In addition to faculty interest and expertise, a third important factor in faculty selection was excellence in teaching. If the Certificate in Aging Studies was to achieve a reputation for quality, then it would have to do so on the strength of its core faculty. Since General College has historically been known for its high quality of undergraduate teaching, we felt a special responsibility to uphold that tradition in a new program with high public visibility. In a small college, faculty who are most talented in the classroom are well-known to colleagues and students. We wanted to balance teaching approaches, styles, and techniques so that students would experience diverse learning opportunities as well as teaching excellence.

Designing a Core Curriculum

The curriculum of the Certificate in Aging Studies is an evolving product influenced by many sources. The literature review and curriculum study were helpful in the early design of core courses. Later, these outlines were filled in with ideas and suggestions by interested colleagues from the All-University Council on Aging, through informal discussions and meetings with the community advisory committee, and, of course, by the hard work of core faculty members.

There was a consensus of opinion that sociology, psychology, and biology were the basic disciplines of gerontology which had to be represented in separate core courses. After careful consideration, two additional core courses were selected to fill out the knowledge and skills offered in the three courses mentioned above. All direct service workers could benefit from a "Communicating With the Older Adult" course which included materials on sensory changes which can inhibit communication, interviewing, group process, and interpersonal skills. Finally, we decided that a course on "Public Programs: National, State, Local" which examined the structure and functions of Social Security, Medicare, medical assistance, the Older Americans Act and model programs would be useful to direct service workers.

The initial course outlines and content have been refined by core faculty members. Two of the courses were taught on an experimental basis before the program was fully developed, and, as a result, further refinements were made. We expect these revisions to continue as the courses and program goals evolve and as evaluation reveals the need for additional curricular change.

In addition to the five four-credit core courses discussed above, each certificate student is required to take four credits of electives. Elected courses allow students to pursue a particular area of interest or skills development not covered in core courses. Since funds and faculty for new

elective courses were not available in the first year of development, students could choose any relevant aging-related course offered at the University of Minnesota. Several new elective courses are currently under development including courses on the "family of late life," "counseling the older adult," and "humanistic perspectives on aging."

A final important component of the curriculum is a six credit internship experience with three basic options. The community advisory committee pointed out the need for a variety of choices to students who were already working full-time jobs in the field. They also advised us that the internship experience might serve as an important stepping stone to lateral or upward job mobility. Coming towards the end of their aging studies, the internship was conceived as a culminating experience where student might sharpen skills, broaden their understanding of agencies, programs, and services, and acquire the experience they needed to better serve the elderly.

Each student with significant experience in the field of aging is required to take one six credit internship toward the end of their course of studies. The internship experience includes a journal, readings, job-related assignments, oral presentations, a weekly seminar, and a final product which often takes the form of a paper.

The type of internship students select is determined by their interests, career goals, previous work experiences, and skills. Sometimes practical matters such as family and work also influence internship selection. Three basic options are available.

Option One. Students may choose to do an internship in the agency where they currently work. However, they are required to assume some new responsibilities, design and/or implement a new program, study, or service in the agency. For example, one certificate student who is a nurse in a nursing home, plans to

assume the responsibilities of the head nurse for three months while she is on leave. In addition to the new staff and administrative responsibilities, she will conduct a study of the charting system on which medical and personal care tasks are recorded. She hypothesizes that a redesigned system will encourage staff to work with residents toward more independant living skills.

Option Two. Certificate students may select an internship in an agency, program, or service area that is new to them. This choice offers students an opportunity to explore another area of the field, meet new staff, broaden their understanding of the elderly, and increase knowledge and skills. An R.N. in a nursing home plans to work in a hi-rise apartment complex in hopes of learning more about the network of referral agencies in the local area. A multi-service agency director will intern at another agency to learn about new services and the administration of a unique volunteer program. A recreation aide who hopes to become a social worker will work with a public housing social worker.

Option Three. Certificate students who decide that neither of the first two options fit their particular interests, goals, or schedules may choose to form a small group which defines a problem facing the elderly and works toward its solution. The problem must be small enough to be manageable, large enough to provide a variety of significant learning activities, and challenging enough to stimulate and maintain the interests of the group for the ten week quarter. The variety of projects which interns might select are almost unlimited. Interns could design and implement a needs assessment project for a local government unit and recommend program development priorities. An outreach project in the downtown single-room occupancy hotels might be designed and carried out for a multi-service agency. A sensitizing in-service training workshop on mobility problems of the elderly could be planned and delivered to city bus drivers. Several social service agencies have requested a group

of interns for work on special projects.

These three internship options are also available to the few students in the Certificate program who have little or no significant work experience with the elderly. An additional responsibility for the inexperienced is that two six credit internships are required instead of one.

Interns meet in a weekly seminar so that each individual student will be exposed to a wide variety of programs, skills, and issues in the field of aging. Experienced adult students have a great deal to learn from each other and these seminars will provide the forum for this learning. The seminars will include formal presentations on the structure, functions, and services of their field agencies, discussions on readings or specific work-related problems or issues, and informal discussions about progress, goals, and new insights.

Securing Formal Approval

At a large university several levels of consultation and approval must be pursued to establish a new program such as the Certificate in Aging Studies. The three General College teaching divisions were consulted during the early stages of development, and the entire faculty was surveyed in the initial assessment study. The Curriculum Committee and Occupational Programs Committee endorsed the development effort on two occasions, and the Long Range Planning Committee ranked the proposal first for college development funding. Final approval in the College must be sought through a formal resolution and vote of the faculty assembly.

Within the University structure, early consultation and approval was achieved through formal grant applications and reviews by appropriate committees. Consultation with all-University level groups and individuals always preceeded funding requests. Several members of the All-University Council on Aging were

consulted at each stage of development and two council members served on the advisory committee. The Center for Educational Development reviewed the program at four different stages of development and recommended funding at each stage. The coordinator of the extension division's Older Adult Program actively worked on program development, secured funds from extension, and obtained endorsement from extension's Curriculum Committee.

Final approval of certificate programs in the state of Minnesota is the responsibility of the Board of Regents after a review and recommendation by the state Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Although the approval process is lengthy and time-consuming it is also helpful in clarification of program structure and goals. Perhaps most importantly, this involved process strengthened the proposal as many persons' ideas and viewpoints were considered at each stage of development. Widespread consultation seemed to help built a consensus of support for the new program. As the number of college, university, and community persons we consulted increased, so did the encouragement, financial assistance, and support needed to make the idea a reality.

Publicizing a New Program

To learn more about the potential students and viability of the proposed Certificate in Aging Studies and to raise funds for development expenses, all the core courses were experimentally offered in the year preceeding Regents review. Brochures were designed for two core courses and for the entire series of courses. Approximately twelve hundred brochures were sent to persons on a mailing list developed from telephone inquiries about aging courses and a comprehensive directory of social service agencies, nursing homes, and other related programs in the seven county metropolitan area. Additional

publicity was gained from two small advertisements in the campus newspaper and course listing in the extension bulletin.

The early evening classes attracted a surprisingly large and varied audience. Five course offerings drew an average of forty-five students. Ages varied from twenty-three to seventy-six with a median slightly over forty. A few of these students had never before taken a college level class, others had Bachelors or Masters degrees, and many were returning to school after several years' sabbatical. After the first two or three course offerings, word-of-mouth seemed to be our most effective method of promotion.

Student Characteristics

In the experimental year, thirty students were admitted into the program from a pool of forty-eight applicants. Criteria for selection included direct service experience with the elderly, length and variety of work experiences, and evidence of previous educational interest in gerontology (attendance at conferences, workshops, classes, etc.). The most significant characteristics of the students are their diversity and the large number of women in their thirties and forties. The table of student characteristics outlines in more detail the diversity of educational and work experiences of the students admitted for the experimental offering.

The diversity of non-traditional students attracted to this program should be interesting to educational gerontologists and university administrators alike. Fifty-three years separated the youngest and oldest student in the program. Educational backgrounds range from high school diplomas to Masters degrees in counseling psychology. Students were employed by an assortment of social service and health care organizations in occupations as varied as recreation aide, licensed practical nurse, and director of a multi-service

agency. The cumulative total of service to the elderly is slightly more than 113 years with the average student employed in the field for nearly 3.8 years.

An additional feature which adds more diversity is that all the core courses are open to non-certificate students. Traditional students from day school who may be interested in one or more courses but not the entire series can enroll. A survey of non-certificate students who took the courses revealed that a few enrolled even though their applications to the program had been denied, others worked with the aged and wanted to improve knowledge and skills, while others wished to understand their own aging process.

With such a broad mixture of ages, backgrounds, and work experiences to draw upon, the classes have proven to be lively and stimulating to students and their instructors. After a long days work, students are anxious to discuss their experiences with older people as illustrative examples for ideas raised in lectures, films, or readings. Older students are pleased to share their own aging experiences and feelings with an interesting and inquisitive audience. Friendships, professional contacts, and client referrals have resulted from the bringing together of this group of people.

Characteristics of Aging Studies Students, 1978-79

Age	Sex	Education	Agency Employed	Position	Years of Service to Aged
41	F	Business College	Multi-Service	Health Assessment	3
57	F	LPN	Hospital	LPN	3
40	F	Dental Assistant	City Recreation Dept.	Recreation Leader	2
23	F	BA	Nursing Home	Social Worker	1
26	F	78 credits	Nursing Home	Therapeutic Recreation Aide	6
38	F	High School	Public Housing	Human Services Coordinator	11
36	F	RN	State Health Dept.	Inspector Nursing Homes	5
44	F	BA	Community Center	Community Organizer	4
36	F	MS	Home Care Program	Social Worker	2
41	F	MA	Gray Panthers	Volunteer	1
36	F	BS	Meals-on-Wheels	Coordinator	3
28	F	BA	Multi-Service	Supervisor Home Care	4
28	F	High School	Social Security	Interviewer	5
45	F	High School	Multi-Service	Health Assessment	5
55	F	Salvation Army Training	Salvation Army	Housing Manager	6
76	M	Salvation Army Training	Salvation Army	Project Director, Congregate Dining	4
25	F	BA	Nursing Home	Administrative Assistant	2
48	F	AA	School Board	Senior's Program Assistant	6
42	F	Human Services Certificate	Nursing Home	Activity Director	6
38	F	High School	Red Cross	Director, Transportation Program	1
35	F	130 credits	Public Housing	Social Worker	1/2
44	F	High School	Nursing Home	Service Coordinator	8
32	F	RN	Nursing Home	Staff Nurse	6
66	F	BA	Nursing Home	Volunteer	2
42	F	High School	Multi-Service	Agency Director	7
64	F	90 credits	Multi-Service	Coordinator	3
32	F	Human Services Certificate	Nursing Home	Activities Director	2
31	F	RN	Nursing Home	Head Nurse	1 1/2
27	M	BS	Nursing Home	Director, Therapeutic Recreation	1 1/2
27	F	BS	County Lung Association	Educator	2

Future Directions

Although we are still in the experimental year of the Certificate in Aging Studies and some development work remains, there is clear evidence that the program is viable. Some discussion and preliminary planning about future directions for the program and its core faculty have occurred.

Because there is a small multidisciplinary team of core faculty, the possibilities for interesting research proposals and outside funding are promising. Two faculty members are currently working on a joint research project and several others are being considered. Requests for the program from rural areas of the state have stimulated discussion about offering the core courses through correspondence study. Several social service agencies have requested one or two day in-service workshops for staff for which continuing education units would be offered. Career mobility for certificate students may be enhanced by a proposed newsletter listing job openings in local agencies.

A Model for the 1980's

The Certificate in Aging Studies can be seen as a development model for the 1980's for several reasons. It was created with a small budget generated from a variety of sources, including tuition income from the experimental course offerings. The program was developed without hiring scarce gerontologists to expensive tenured faculty positions but instead redirected and retrained available faculty to meet the needs of a different student population. The entire series of core courses is offered through the extension division's night school where the largest educational growth is anticipated in the next decade. The courses attract large numbers of non-traditional students which enables the program not only to be completely self-supporting but also income-generating. In a period of austere educational budgets, the importance of

this practical financial consideration cannot be overlooked.

Why should the model be an undergraduate certificate? We know that there are a large number of untrained direct service workers in the field, but little data on their educational backgrounds is available. The preceeding table clearly indicates that direct service workers of all ages, educational background, and experience want a coherant program of studies which improves their knowledge and skills. Almost two-thirds of the students in this program would be ineligible for a certificate offered at the graduate level. Of those who might be eligible for a graduate degree or certificate program, many have expressed an unwillingness or inability to make the kind of time and financial committment that graduate level work requires. Middle-aged service providers who already have graduate, undergraduate, or nursing degrees are not generally as interested in acquiring another degree as they are in improving their prospects for career mobility. An undergraduate level certificate is especially appropriate for the large number of nurses aides and other service providers who have little or no college level work. For the growing number of students who will seek entry to direct service in the next ten years, the undergraduate certificate can be used as a career-oriented supplement to traditional majors in sociology, psychology, and other related fields. It can also be used as the major core of studies for non-traditional baccalaureate degree programs.

In the next decade educational gerontologists should turn their attention to the untrained direct service worker. They are the most important link between the world of gerontological research and theory and the realities of life and death for millions of the nation's elderly. This link should be encouraged, stimulated, and nurtured in the future despite austere financial restraints.

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